

Congresswoman Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Joint Oversight & Investigations and Health Subcommittee Hearing
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Opening Statement
As Prepared for Delivery

SPOKANE

President Biden's open-borders agenda is putting Americans across this country at risk every day...turning every town into a border town.

More people than ever are dying from fentanyl poisonings.

It's the leading cause of death for Americans between the ages of 18 and 45.

Just last month in my district, law enforcement from the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), and Spokane Police Department seized 35 pounds of meth and about **50 thousand** fake pills believed to be laced with fentanyl.

It takes just one pill to kill.

That was Molly Cain's message to us when she testified before our committee a few weeks ago.

She is pleading for action... and for justice for her son Carson.

He should be alive today... but one pill he purchased off Snap Chat killed him instantly.

No parent should have to feel Molly's pain.

FENTANYL SUPPLY

Most illicit fentanyl and fentanyl analogues being smuggled across the border are being produced by cartels in Mexico—with precursor ingredients sourced from China.

Criminals and drug dealers are selling these deadly substances in communities and are killing a record number of Americans—71,000 in 2021.

Nearly two-thirds of drug overdose deaths in the United States in 2021 involved synthetic opioids.

So far in 2023, DEA has seized 4.5 million fake pills laced with fentanyl and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has seized more than 1400 pounds of fentanyl.

And this is just the amount that has been seized – how much is being missed?

The U.S. / Mexico border is close to two thousand miles long. How many pounds of fentanyl are coming across the areas that are scarcely monitored between ports of entry?

SOLUTIONS

That is why we need to secure the southern border and stem the flow of these weapons-grade poisons.

The Biden administration is set to do the opposite and create more chaos if the President ends the Title 42 protections.

That cannot happen.

Republicans are offering alternatives to keep people safe and save lives.

For example, Rep. Lesko has legislation to update Title 42 so it can be used in the case of situations we see with the fentanyl crisis.

We also must pass the HALT Fentanyl Act, led by Representatives Griffith and Latta, to permanently place fentanyl-related substances into Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act.

This will ensure that our law enforcement officials have the tools they need to keep these poisons off our streets.

As DEA has told us, this permanent scheduling is a top priority.

PUBLIC HEALTH

In addition to discussing the fentanyl crisis, we will examine today how the influx of migrants is straining hospital capacity and making it harder to treat patients.

Yuma Regional Medical Center in Arizona has had to delay care for patients because of the surge in migrants.

They've had to hire additional staff to keep up with the demand.

El Paso, Texas, declared a state of emergency. The mayor said hundreds and hundreds of people are living in unsafe conditions because of the migrant surge.

These challenges created by President Biden's open border agenda have only been made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic and work force shortages from his authoritarian vaccine mandates. The status quo is unworkable, and it is harming patient care.

CLOSING

I look forward to from the witnesses here on the ground who are on the frontlines of President Biden's border crisis.

We want to know what more we can be doing for a more secure future and to help keep your communities safe.

Thank you and I yield back.

